

Quest

Lynn University
Literary Magazine
Volume 2 - Spring 1998



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Quest is an annual literary and arts journal for students and faculty of Lynn University. Poetry, short stories, essays and artwork are accepted for consideration beginning in the fall of each year. Please forward submissions to the Office of Arts and Sciences at Wixted/Frieberger Hall, attention **Quest**.

This year's Quest is grounded thematically in the four material elements of Medieval alchemy—*air*, *fire*, *water* and *earth*. Woodcuts of the old symbols used for the elements were specially executed to introduce each section in this volume.

The concept that all forms of matter depend on the existence of only four elements probably predates the Greeks. Indeed, we encounter it already well-established in the dialogues of Plato (*Timmaeus*), and it enters Medieval alchemy as a nearly complete theory through Aristotle.

According to Aristotle, the four elements arise as a simple manifestation of even more fundamental material qualities—*hot*, *cold*, *moist* and *dry*—combined in pairs, an idea that would surely appeal to the modern particle physicist. Hence, *air* comes from the joining of hot and moist, *fire* from the hot and dry, *water* from the cold and moist and *earth* from the cold and dry. And so the basis for the alchemist's dream: to manipulate these qualities was to transmute matter.

It is but a small step from four elements and their constituent properties to the Greek physician Galen's notion of four essential fluids or humours in the human body—*blood*, *choler*, *phlegm* and *melancholy* or "black choler." The relative amounts of these humors were supposed to determine one's physical and mental disposition or temperament - *sanguine* (cheerful), *choleric* (hot-tempered), *phlegmatic* (stoic) or *melancholic* (sad).

To the Medieval mind, the active elements *air* and *fire* were represented in sanguinous and choleric temperaments, respectively, and the passive elements *water* and *earth* in the phlegmatic and melancholic. A connection here with the origin and treatment of disease is obvious.



More importantly, however, these active and passive humours were also believed to be linked with the masculine/creative principle on one hand and the feminine/receptive principle on the other. Hence, the idea of four humours (affected by four underlying elements) extended naturally to the sentiment, style, spirit and feeling of literary and artistic expression.

There is something of the alchemist in every poet. Prior to the great schism between science and magic, precipitated by Bacon and others in the 16th and 17th centuries, the alchemist was the archetypal natural mystic. In the alchemical worldview, *physika* and *mystika* could not be separated. Rather, the entire sensible world was woven together inextricably by a mysterious *anima mundi* identifiable with the ethereal *quinta essentia* of the ancients. Thus, unlike Bacon who would wrench nature's secrets out by sheer force, the alchemist's way necessarily was to woo and court her. Of course, the first approach being the more powerful has prevailed, and we see its destructive consequences in our current ecological and social crises. Fortunately, however, the alchemical mind lived on, itself transmuted, to inform the literature of the age from Shakespeare to Blake. And as evidenced here, the great *anima mundi* continues to inspire poets to this very day.

Frederick Cichocki
April, 1998

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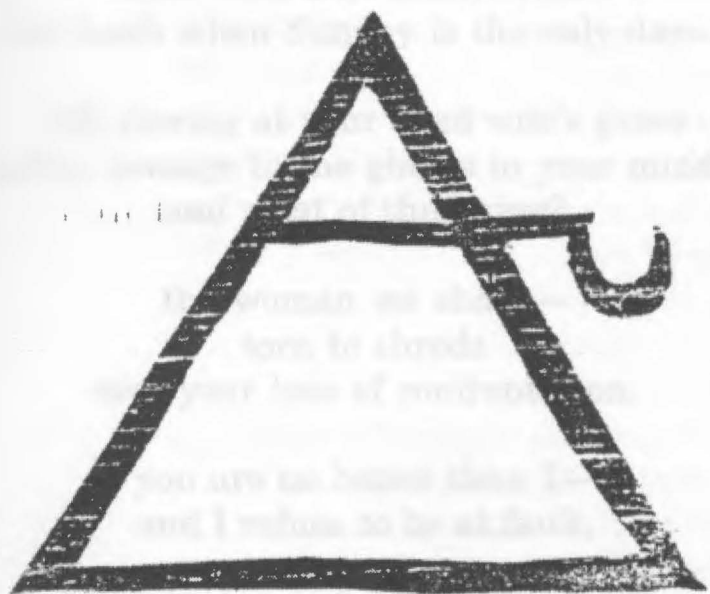
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Humble Surrender—

—to the one who plays Christmas—
—your Saviour.



—Archie Gend



humble yourself—
for you are the one who plays Christian—
every Sunday.

what does that mean to me?
not much when Sunday is the only day—

still staring at your dead wife's grave
paying homage to the ghosts in your mind—
and what of the living?

the woman we share—
torn to shreds
over your love of confrontation.

you are no better than I—
and I refuse to be at fault,
anymore.

—Andrea Best

Muse Poetica

Born into this world
On a remote beach in Bali,
your soul rose up from the sea
on the most mystical night
since the dawn of time.
You see beauty
in everyone;
chaos within yourself,
lies all around you.
Knowing all that is
inside of me—
what is beautiful,
what is awful,
what feels wrong.
You live on the edges of reality
just beyond that ethereal wall—
where body is intangible
and soul is in your grasp.
Moving as if you are a star
in Zeus' palm—
with a wave of his hand,
he sends you skittering
across the night sky,
burning holes in the clouds
and scratching the night with
a cool white fire.



You speak in whispers
curling off into the wind
with such sincerity—
bringing even the angels to tears.
Existing solely to be the object
of my affection,
my obsession,
my direction—
to keep me sane.
Loving you before we ever met—
loving the idea of you.

—Joleen Capella

nothing lingers
in your house of roses

again
you color your sky
magnolia yellow
your chalk markings
cheaper than paint
are blown away

again
your cardboard willow
your spray painted rainbow
do not mislead me

again
your complex riddles
are not mistaken
for meaningful conversation

behind your door
false embraces
lead to unfulfilled dreams

again
words do not float
but crash from your lips
as lies spill
in golden entrails to the floor

again
a tear swells
as reality surfaces

again
I am indifferent

again
I know better

—Andrea Best

Dove

It's the gentle understanding
Knowing he can't be touched
As he sits perched in the morning dew
So calm and peaceful
In his harmonious meditation
He becomes an inspiration
To whoever looks his way
As your sight is graced with his presence
His mission has been completed
You saw him and smiled
Now he flies away to another waking eye.

—Darcy Facenda



One Cool Evening

On this cool evening, this cool night,
You are my only guiding sight.

Like people kissing, like birds in trees,
Still I'm searching for only me.

I do not know where I'll find,
Another girl who looks so fine,
As you my dear—you are the one,
That I will love, till life is done.

We'd make love, all through the night,
We would soar to such pleasing heights.

The years I've waited—the days have passed.
I've taken blows, and fought through the crash.

People say love finds a way
To heal souls, till joyous days.

I hope I can just please you.
I'll do what it takes to get on through.

Other visions I have seen
Start with love, and then turn mean.

That is not you. You are so true.
Your beauty runs just through and through,
Like struggling sunshine, like struggling day.

I hope you never go away.

My heart is big, and red for you.
My love will always come so true.

Till the ending day does come.
Our love shall never be outdone.

—James Lineen

Midnight Betrayals

Stumbling through my house in the dark
I move cautiously over the floor
uncertain it will hold me up
uncertain the walls won't close ranks
the chairs won't raise their arms like swords
and challenge my midnight quest for water.

The moon outside has turned away
to cool her face in the western sea.
Expect no help from her tonight.
The breeze, alive and wandering,
rubs its back against my legs
and curls up panting in the grate

where earlier had burned a fire.
The strangeness in this house is such
that if the bulk of chair beside me
rose up and addressed me by my name,
I might be startled, but not amazed
for every thing breathes tonight.

Elijah rocks in the garden hammock.
The dreaming earth turns and sighs;
Dew fills cups of thirsty flowers,
drops like tears on lips of leaves,
while stars burn cool with distant fires
and continue to recede.

My loneliness, like a flute,
engulfs my senses with lament.
Familiar masks have slipped aside;
I begin to wonder who I am.
Something moves over the mirror's surface.
Is it my face, or the face of the wind?

—Kathryn Kruger





Five Haiku

Everywhere people,
Busy, frenetic, seething;
What's the moon to them?

Frogs in full chorus.
Why is no one listening
But the moon and stars?

During that catnap
The moon's eyebrow changed somehow
Into a wan smile.

Cold, cloud-frosted moon.
'Cross its face a lone bat scrawls—
One word, then is gone.

Like the moon herself,
The wan moon flowers dissolve
In the light of day.

—Frederick Cichocki

Innocence

My truest dearest love,
In your eyes I see the breaking of the waves and
shadows

Of tides not known on this earth,
Birth exploding in your twinkling orbs,
I see morning.

I see the shadows of angels in golds and blues,
Blowing kisses to the moon
Adieu! Adieu!

In your most fragile movements,
Morning arises
Dolphins collide
And the whispers of children abide.

Angels and butterflies
Ride the horizon
At the first light of day.

Unicorns run away with the night
With only the children to see them.
And you my love, my angel, my sweet,
You are my morning, my night,
My whole heart complete.

Such beauty do I dare embrace,
Surrounded by light forms and shadows of lace.
My angel beside me, yet to awake
Still and perfect—
Like the way morning breaks.

—Joleen Capella



where have you gone?
chasing love in cold cities—
falling short of success.

left with empty arms—
you look to the past.
take comfort in a time less confused—
a time when men knew what to be.

half fulfilled dreams left scattered
like autumn leaves kicked to the edge of your
path—
now winding.
the rock-and-roll drummer—
the loving husband—
the proud father—
all flow free in the breeze.

I like your smile—
not often seen.
through misshapen eyes
you see the world—
a place of ultimate competition—
where you again fall short.

for me—
what I see is a heart.
it beats—
beneath its shroud of thorny protection—
and it bleeds for us all.

—Andrea Best

Soft, bright light
illuminating with colors—
Which is your strongest passion?
Can you read my mind?
Or
would you rather have sex?
Where have these years taken you?
Have you reached the awakening,
with all its pleasures?
Comprehension of the worlds around us
takes great skill—
it is hard to find others with an understanding.
It is all very frustrating—
trying to communicate with the living dead.
As each spends many a life,
seeking the truth that can be learned,
they will come,
and we shall talk,
not with our mouths,
but with simple complexity.
So slumber now
and dream of a higher place—
the chakras will guide you,
through earth, through space.

—Jennifer Preston



Joy surrounds us, all around us.
There is no way we can escape it.
Let yourself embrace it.
It is there for our taking.
We love to ignore it. Instead
we listen to exceptions
and look for reasons,
reasons to deplore it.
I love to sing, I love to dance,
but what if I did not have the chance?
Be happy for your family,
be happy for your friends.
Be happy for yourself and make amends.
But most of all, just be happy.
Be happy because you can. I can
You can. Why bother spending time
on emotions, feelings not divine.
One thing we do not have is
time. So let us enjoy this happiness.
Mine and yours.
Yours and mine.

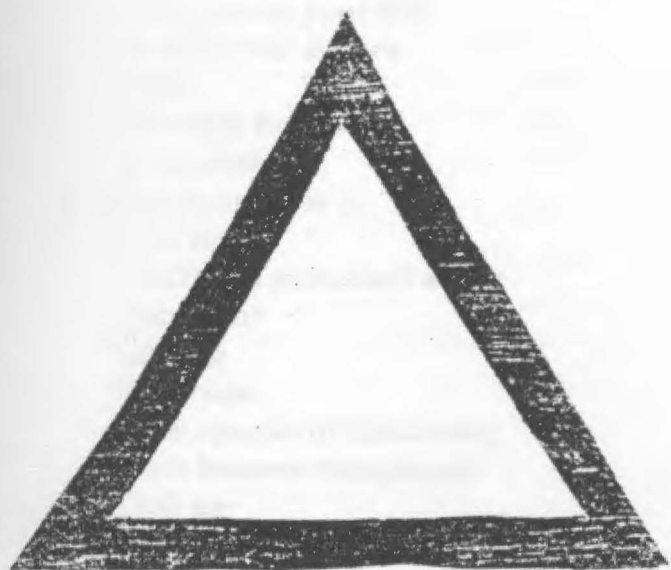
—Reid Horrow

Secret Obsession

Trusting eyes, lovely thighs—
See her walk, the way she talks.
No one's near her sensuality—
I can't let her get to me.

Need to focus on what is real—
Don't even know the way she feels.
Is it just my imagination
Or a simple case of fascination?

—Reid Horrow





The Witching Hour

Midnight is upon us;
The witching hour is here.
Denial turns to lust;
confusion disappears.
Distant winds are moving,
coming low across the sea.
to kiss away your fear
to open your senses
to me.
Strength builds
in candlelight.
A sigh escapes
your lips.
Inhibition scratched away;
Impatient
clawing
fingertips.
Eyes opaque in blackness;
souls become encaptured.
Tied up
in love,
Ridiculous ripples
of rapture.
Elegance lies
in afterglow—
Bodies entwined
together;
The lovely curtain
of sleep approaches,
promising tomorrow,
time,
and forever.

—Joleen Capella

I want to lay you back
to the ground
eyes taped wide
open to the sun
burn your retinas
to their core
make you blind to everything
but me

—Andrea Best



Sonnet: A Memory

It is the light at dusk that calls me back—
Recalls me. The flaming orange peel edged with pink
That rimmed the fall of day in southern France—
Uzez it was, near Avignon—and on the brink
Of our experience till then. I drove
A rented car (Peugot I think) around
An intersection that branched out in spokes—
So many roads we held our breath, astounded
Less by the chance of getting lost than by
The light! The brilliant, vivid, reddened fire
That burns even now, five years later, as I
Recall the sight. Then, voicing my desire
To freeze the flame in memory, I told
My young bedazzled children, "It is gold!"

—Diane Richard-Allerdyce

Passion Fire

Like a fiery black Volcano,
Pushing up from Down the Deep,
Pounding, Pressing, Pushing, Piercing
Upward, outward, on the creep,

Seeking torrents of my loving,
Rushing like a river toward me,
Flowing, Flooding, Filling, Falling,
Down into this empty sea.

Till at last came breathless raining,
Washing o'er me — still it came,
Slowly, Soothing, Softly, Safely
Putting out the dancing flame.

Dies the passion deep within me.
Now I cry with silent tear,
Weeping, Wanting, Wishing, Willing,
Fuel to fire that Ancient Fear.



'Tis the trick that Nature plays us,
Longing for that burning love.
When it comes and lays beside us,
Seek we mercy from above.

So I drift on gentle waters,
Swaying like a dying tree,
Listless, Lifeless, sad and lonely,
Dreaming of a Fiery Sea,

Till the next Volcano rises,
Pushing, Pressing, on the move,
Fades away the empty Longing,
Fills the cup with Vibrant Love.

—Ann Crawford

The Heartbreak of Smoking

All I want is another cigarette
to feel tobacco and nicotine
singing in my veins
to feel them dance and play hopscotch
within the imprisoning, vibrating confines
of the redness of my beating heart.
Red like love, the color of hearts and lace
thrown into empty plastic barrels on Valentine's Day
by lost couples and missing lovers
wandering through malls and streets
like zombies without maps.
Red, also the color of blinding fury,
so much red anger
that I couldn't even see through
my drifting cigarette smoke, or
the crystal of my tears.
I could probably get through this



if I could just have another cigarette
or even someone to talk to
whose voice would actually answer mine
in something other than a hollow echo
devoid of tone, reverberating lifelessly off bare room walls
reciting memorized declarations of love
in monotones, along with the details
of a long-dead love affair
combined with the latest baseball standings and stats.
Not even a cigar, or your arms around me, would be able
to bat .341 this time.
I guess it really is over this time
no one on base, no home runs, no RBI's
no more bleeding, running shades of red.
All that's left is to make it official—
game called on account of shattering heartbreak
and an empty pack of cigarettes.

—Linda M. O'Connor

Good Lucifer

If goodness thrives when eyes do cry,
I curse the angels in the sky
And dance about that hellish fire
Burning in my soul's desires.

If righteousness must be so sad,
Let all my thoughts and deeds be bad,
Let raindrops burn and church bells scream
While nightmares cast out pleasant dreams.

If virtuous ways bear sacrifice,
May gentle mildness turn to ice,
May wretchedness become a friend
And bring the living world to an end.

—Monica I. Floreani



Animus

Striding out of the morning light
with each step you arrive
complete, from the world of senses, blown
from the world of dreams. You
are life's essence—pacing with strong
silent feet the naked
floor of a woman's heart. You
are the prince who uproots a forest
with two hands and outrageous longing.
I want to weave you into
my daily rituals of love and duty,
but you are light on the throat
of falling water. And you are dust
on the breeze after my heart
has threshed its longing. Teach me how
to move through this difficult
life. Guide me through circuitous
paths of knowledge and desire.
Show me the buried treasure. And with
the bright blade of courage,
with the white tusk of certain
action, lay siege to my life—
Illumine.

—Kathryn Kruger

what I wanted
to tell you
heavy—
held by fright
never left my throat—
half shouting

if these chains
I wrapped
tight around my heart
would loosen
drop flat down
to the floor

maybe I would
invite you in
my comfortable cell—
now chilled
but warming

we could dance—
red flaming
and melt the ice
which forms around
the words

“I love you”

—Andrea Best



nightfire

it is now
when I finally
can become
myself,
under the thick
cover
of night.
nothing brings
such comfort
as the stars,
the rustle
of the trees
in a sweet
night breeze.
inhibition disappears,
passion is unbridled.
fireflies dance
in the window,
a candle shimmers—
reflecting fire-opals
on pale sheets.
starfire—
I hold in my hands—
passing smoke
between bodies;
kindling,
curling on skin,
creating pyropassion.

—Joleen Capella

THE ANT

I
f e
r s
o a
w h
n c
e c

d upon his franti

Along this warmly cushioned land

Each tiny step in perfect place,

Each further up my barren hand.

I watched him march with steady haste,

Such toil and trouble kept me amazed.

The smallness of his brainless pace

And burden of

his feeble fate

Impelled my will to crush his faith.

I would put his efforts all to waste,

But strangeness squirmed into my gaze.

My hand fell short in shamefelt grace

The creature looked me in the face

And asked this as he turned my way:

Am I of all, the one you blame?

I may be all you say, but ma'am,

Shouldn't you at least

have learned

my name?

—Monica I. Floreani



porters of pain

at once, they begin their work
blinding my vision, cooling
my temper.
they struggle, as do I
carrying unseen pain
on their glassy backs.

the fire burning beneath
my temples diminishes
as my heart is softly
caressed by their service.
they leave with no trace of
their existence

just as softly as they came.

—Diane Randolph

and if I stop myself
from loving you
when every
crimson droplet
through every
pulsing vein
swells and throbs
with the boiling
anticipation
of every word
that crests your lips—

then
it is I
who must be punished

—Andrea Best

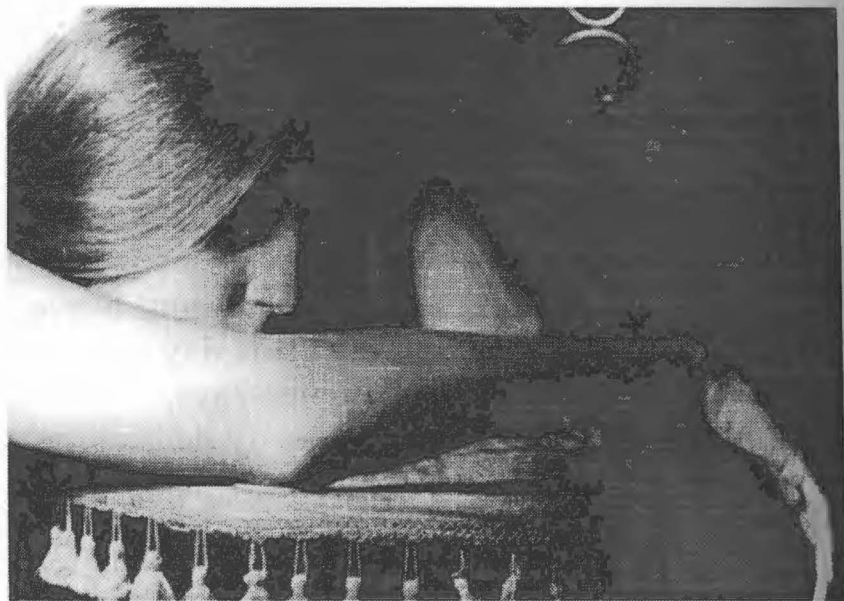




Ephemeral

Born from the misty silence of wondrous haze
Rolled a tear of joy
Down a flowered face.
From behind the veil, I stopped to gaze
At the unrobed beauty of her unrivaled grace.
Then she fell unto grass where dew drops lay
Like Olympia, sparkling more delicate and brave
Than any marvel I've yet seen to this day.
Then the Sun, himself, with angelic rays,
Came down to kiss, and dry her away.

—Monica I. Floreani



My love is dangling, like the long arm
of a small L, looping and
sloping,; grammatically
flirting with the corners
of the page.

my love is a shadow approaching;
its darkness embracing and creating
the borders of light.

My love is river dancing,
the waves licking the soft sides
of hard-edged rocks

my love is a hand flitting;
rolling pen, from
left to right
trying
to recapture
You,
as the L slopes
as the shadows sigh,
and the river rests,

trying all the time.

—Diane Randolph

Dying Numbness

Raw

fingers torn and bleeding
torn flesh hangs uselessly from rotted gray bone
nails chewed down to the slow of the quick

I saw the light in your eyes
and the quick gleam of your smile
and I remembered I was about to die.

Coils of colorless rain fall in curtains
dancing with wind in concentric white circles
searching for drabness
and missing the ocean.

You went out to the porch to get me a bowl of soup
and vanished into a hollow purple limousine
to go and look for the parts of the Pacific
that they didn't bother to chart on a map
or maybe to find some lost tree branch somewhere,



trailing uselessly along brown unfertile ground
limbs twisted into red paroxysm of helplessness
just as my arms were when they used to hold you.
Maybe one day you'll finally find
that indoor glass cemetery that you've been
lost inside for most of your life.
Too bad I won't be there, or be able to
wash away your sparkling empty tears before
they shatter.
Instead, I'll take a long swig of chilled cappuccino
lie on frozen plains of beached beige sand
and wait for the numbness to tell me
that it's finally my turn to die.

—Linda M. O'Connor

Gioia

Go through it all much like
you would a carnival.
Love true, sing loud, roam free
and curious as a child.
Drink up, laugh much, spread cheer
and warmth throughout the crowd.
And paint about the joy
you cannot live without.

—Monica I. Floreani



... something about the way the
water danced
over keloided remnants of childhood
brought me back
to darkened rooms; curtains drawn,
the innocence of youth
mercilessly deadened with
the birth of each new star.

radiators churn away at
the impending darkness,
unveiled windows display
mosquito attracting streetlights
as small butter colored fingertips
wipe vagrant tears.

those stars, these same stars
I watch now.

—Diane Randolph

Snowy Nights

Tap tap tap
of the razorblade—
the ritual begins.
Turn the air on—
it's clumping.
Draw them out,
pretty white lines,
smooth chemicals.
Pass the mirror
and watch
as you snort your life
away.
Got a problem?
Ask the 8-Ball

Conversation—
endless conversation;
we were
philosophers,
poets.
Ideas flowed.
Secrets spilled in
quiet confessionals
until it all
went
bad—
until we went
just a little
too
far.

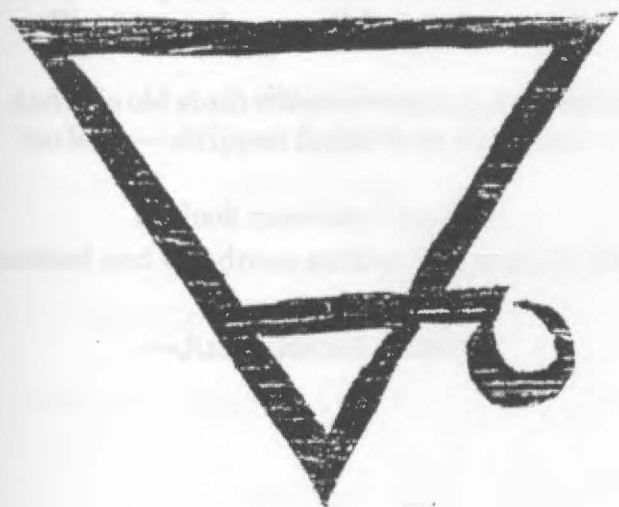
Here
comes
another
tremor.

Hatred takes over.
Bitterness creeps in
with the realization
that you are
nothing
but a shell.
The body aches
and the mind
becomes muddled.

It is over.
It was all a dream—
nights blend together,
and memories
fade
away.

Still, that old
familiar itch
haunts me from time
to time.
Once an addict,
always
an addict.
The monkey
is close
behind.

—Joleen Capella





Scratched and marred, your golden surface has made a place for me.
What tales do you tell
if only I will look carefully?

Perhaps a boy like mine made these marks here.
Was his mother mad? Did she despair?

And this old stain where sweating glass stood
too long — stripped finish from the wood —

If I look carefully I can see
Your scratched and wondrous surface has made a place for me.

—Judy Jones Walker

mother

Daughter, woman, wife. mother,
mummy . . .
the addition of each name; a concrete
block
adding to the increasing paranoia
that sat upon her shoulders.
the cascading curls, framing the luminate
brown skin
and eyes . . .
eyes always ablaze, puzzled;
perfunctly innocent.

the block which was too heavy to bear?
—Mother.

—Diane Randolph



am I a woman yet?
or is that something to grow into—
slowly?

do you know something I don't know?
I stare into my own eyes—
frightened.

I long for sleep—
sometimes,
to end the ceaseless beating—
in my head.

the mind can move mountains—
and the soul will live forever.

what if I don't want to live forever?

—Andrea Best

MY MUSE SLEEPS

WITH TIP-TOED FEET
I CREEP AROUND ITS LAIR,
SLEEK BY DESIGN,
POWERFUL BY DEMAND.
AND WHEN IT WAKES
WITH LIGHTNING SPEED
IT COILS
AROUND MY VULNERABLE NECK
AND SQUEEZES.

LIFE JUICES ERUPTING—
PEN TO PAGE.
I AM THE VICTIM,
AN INNOCENT BYSTANDER
WATCHING WITH DISTASTE
AS MY MUSE
HAS ITS WAY WITH ME
AGAIN.

I FEAR IT ALWAYS—
SMARTER,
WISER THAN I.
I JUST LET IT HAPPEN
UNTIL THERE IS NOTHING LEFT—
MY VERY HEART'S BLOOD ON THE PAGE.
I SCREAM—
SOMETIMES.
AND THEN IT SLEEPS.

MY MUSE SLEEPS.

—Andrea Best



My Queen

—dedicated to Maya Angelou

She's my queen and I understand that maybe I'll be a
queen like her one day.
The way she talks and tells her stories makes my mind
drift into a time
of awaking slaves. I sleep hoping someone will come and
awake me from
my dream. Will it be my queen? or my ancestor visiting me
in my sleep?
I question thy heart, thy mind, thy lips; don't lie because
my queen
taught me to tell stories of truth, not stories of lies.

If I enter a room and someone says "my dreams are weak,
and they will never come true" I will simply say, my queen
makes
my mind strong, and my heart sing songs, of laughter and
joy.

With my queen nothing can ever go wrong.

But I'm a queen, because of my strong heart and soul
and she made this possible from her faith. Inside
her words is where it hides and she is the queen of this
time and
will always be
My
Queen of my Divine.

—Shanillia Forbes

Rocking in a K-Hole

It all seems like a dream
21 years ago how I screamed
It's funny that I was created by love
but 15 years later I would be so hated
for my messed-up view
and my hard-core attitude
for drinking with my crew
at the back of Lakeside school

On Saturday nights we used to go to Fever
over the rainbow down to the underground
to hear the funky techno sounds
with all the K that I bought
to get lost so lost in my thoughts
so deep in those crazy-ass beats
lost in the hole till Goldie tapped me
and told me to go
and speak to Willow Rose
in the bathroom is where you'll find her head
but lo and behold
I was misled
oh wait, no I wasn't, there she is
she and I hugged and embraced



and she told me not to take
the chemicals with the moon shape
for those chemicals are laced
I said thanks my friend
waved a peace sign
till we meet again
losing my adrenaline
I wanted no more
so I found my crew
and pointed to the door
found out it was 4:00
in the morning
I started yawning
we all hopped in the jeep
since I was driving they all could sleep

Now this part gets a little more complex
as I was driving
but never passed my test
Courtney pointed to the color of the sky
I should have let the moment pass me by
instead the rising sun caught my eye
and in the stillness of the autumn wind
all I heard was a crash

—Jason Saltzman

the frontroom

in the room you could have
used as a living room
blanketed by some obscure term;
parlour, was it?
I can hear the soft
murmurs of
your voice and hers.

I never did wonder
why she always answered the phone
yet heard the stumbling in
your daughter's voice
referring to her as
"my mother's friend"

uh huh.

but now,
sitting in the frontroom set
adjacent to your bedroom,
—and hers I remind myself—
I hear the happy murmuring and
wonder what it's about.

the creaking of doors
and running water breaks my
concentration; I lose the
stream of consciousness



again I am engrossed in a
conversation we had earlier;
“Yes, my friend and her partner”
—the term partner catching me off guard,
“She’s a gay black woman adopted
by white parents and . . .”
your comments trailed off into
a sea of wonder (a rapidly moving
sea at that)

I can’t help but to think
now, as I sit
swallowed by the couch
in the room set adjacent to yours
—and hers I remind myself. and hers—
in the parlour, was it?
did you rush through that
story because of some obscure term
that symbolizes a world?
Partner, was it?
yes. partner.

—Diane Randolph

Deer-Bound

I

Walking across the field,
I feel someone spying on me. I hear the crackle
of the leaves,
beneath someone's feet.

II

In the peaceful stillness I see the deer.
The deer is undisturbed by me.

III

The deer moves so gracefully,
making its way over the field.

IV

The deer blends in with the trees.
Is it trying to disappear?

V

The deer looks like a summer's day,
warm and soothing.

VI

In the evening dusk the deer is beauty in motion,
a gift from God to show his grace.



VII

Fierce creatures prey
on the deer's innocence.

VIII

The deer's eyes are coal,
filled with a frightening nightmare.

XI

The deer listens, with his ears at attention,
for some unforeseen danger.

X

Against the rolling hills, the deer,
part of a magnificent painting.

XI

The deer tightens its muscles
preparing for its journey.

XII

Among the stillness,
I hear the deer moving.

XIII

The deer bounds gracefully over the hills.
Again there is stillness.

—by Jenna Adkins

Road Movie

I'm driving nowhere
speeding on a one-way ticket to
an empty gas tank
searching for my lost reality
that was left somewhere in a roadside ditch
to crawl away without its crutches
and die amidst a dusty graveyard of roadkill.
Sirens shriek for help in the distance
(receiving none) as brushfires build along the curb
and light my way among the bonfires.
I passed a killer with black eyes and a yellow grin
that reflected rotting gray maggots
and brown earthworms stolen from the graves of his victims.
I gave him \$5 and let him drive on.
Drove on
white glaring headlights slicing dark night's bread
into neat little mismatched lines and segments.
Got to get to the wooden old bridge
before my blood boils over
and spills out of my veins, bursting and spoiling
arteries, capillaries, plasma, hemoglobin
splattered over hollow bones and lost flesh.
It'll flood my heart and awaken my nerves
sleeping their black sleep in a net of ivory membranes
whispering and singing a silent ode that only platelets can hear



amidst a stream of muttered curses.
Dear God, help me, I don't want to feel again
nothing but the cold blue plastic steering wheel
under my hand
and the sharp stinging of torn navy leather
itching the backs of my knees
letting me know
that I'll always be able to go 65 or less
in this game of chases and forgotten black and white road movies.
but it never worked then, and now it never will.
None of it ever will.

Just before the curve of the bridge
loomed over the road ahead
I plowed into a rolling empty beer billboard
and was totally obliterated
in a flaming hot blaze world of yellow/orange blankness.
Hell, I didn't even make it to the stop sign.

—Linda M. O'Connor

Road Movie

A CHILLY EVENING
FROM TREES CRISP LEAVES FALL AGAIN
I AM LEFT BEHIND

—Andrea Best



The grass on my feet,
when the beautiful foals come,
is like a sharp knife.

—Jenna Adkins

Renga — A Japanese communal poem

- 1 The pines this morning
Seem to nod more than normal—
Perhaps still sleepy? (FC)
- 2 The sounds of the birds singing,
Music to our ears today. (BJ)
- 3 The bells are ringing.
What do I care about them?
I prefer bird song. (KK)
- 4 Breezes play a melody
That soothes my mind and my soul.
(DM-P)
- 5 My soles are filled with sand,
So are the roots of these trees.
How deep do they go? (KK)
- 6 The roots that are growing here
Have been here many-a-year. (RC)
- 7 Time has no meaning,
Not to the forest keepers.
Life goes on and on. (BJ)
- 8 The forest recaptures time,
Bringing back the ancient past. (ER)



松の葉の
 やれ大きく
 ねむい朝

Range — A Japanese contemporary poem

- 1 The grass like morning
beats its head more than needles
Part you will sleep? (FC)
- 9 Past of seedlings gone,
Present of trees growing strong,
Future is unknown. (CC)
- 10 Love the forest; it loves you.
Be conscious of what you do. (BJ)
- 11 An old dead acorn—
To the ants it is only
Another meal. (FC)



落ちてるとんぐり

おいさんのとんぐり

でもアリ君には

凄いいちそう

The ants seem drunk on sake.
I'm just naturally like this. (KK)

アリ達が
酒を飲んで
ほろ酔い気分
でもこれが
私の本性よ

英明



- 13 We are too silent.
Would sake help anyone?
The birds were drinking. (BJ)
- 14 Silence is golden today,
While we sit here and play. (MM)
- 15 I find such peace here
With nature as my playmate.
Can't peace be everywhere? (DM-P)
- 16 Seeking the meaning of life
And finding Mother Nature. (SK)
- 17 We are all hiding.
The sun, source of energy—
The shade is lovely. (BJ)
- 18 I feel throughout my body
The warmth that surrounds me. (DC)
- 19 My body is drunk
With newly consumed sake
Reaching every pore. (CC)
- 20 My hiccups that ring out loud
Frighten away the creatures. (JA)



Abandoned

Your eyes slice through me like
twin headlights separating dusk
cutting through the descending night
of my numbness—
a dumb blank stare
that sees all yet sees nothing
as you turn and start to walk away
down the empty, twisting road of
brown and gray dust
(that doesn't lead back to home),
you mutter something about going
to look for a gas station
and I turn away
to count stars
and try to figure out
just how many feet it is
from my outstretched hand
to your rapidly receding back.

—Linda M. O'Connor

